

*Washington, DC*—Congressman Tim Ryan (OH-17) voted today for the largest investment in community colleges and college aid in American history. The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA) (H.R. 3221) will expand access to an affordable college education to more American students, transform early education opportunities, and build a world-class community college system at no cost to American tax payers. The passage of the SAFRA will help build a stronger, more competitive American economy for the future while saving taxpayers money.

**“One of the key components to rebuilding our local economy is to have access to high quality, affordable higher education,”** said Congressman Ryan. **“I want to make sure that our area’s young adults are ready to take on the engineering, green energy and high tech manufacturing jobs that we’re creating here at home. This bill will help make our new Eastern Gateway Community College one of the finest in the nation.”**□

The bill will have specific impacts on community colleges from around the country including Eastern Gateway Community College which opened its doors in the Mahoning Valley just last week. The bill creates a new competitive grant program for community colleges to improve instruction, work with local employers, improve student support services and help implement innovative reforms that lead to a college degree or certificate. The Challenge Grant funds can be used to facilitate transfer of credit articulation agreements, create workforce programs that blend basic skills and occupational training that would lead to industry-recognized credentials, increase community college completion rates and expand academic and training programs for high-wage occupations in high-demand industries.

**“This bill will help transform our community college system into the very best education and job training centers in the world,”** said Congressman Ryan. **“We are going to ensure that our students graduate with the tools they need to get high-wage jobs in high demand industries.”**□

The bill will also significantly increase government grant and loan assistance for college tuition payments. Pell Grants, already distributed to more than 7 million students, will increase to \$6,900 by 2019 from \$5,350 today. SAFRA also keeps interest rates low on

government-subsidized loans, makes substantial investments in early childhood education, expands the Perkins low-cost loan program to every U.S. College, and simplifies the process of applying for student financial aid.